



SENATOR
BILL HARDIMAN

E-Hardiman Herald



*Chair, Families & Human
Services Committee
Appropriations Committee:
Chair, Family Independence
Agency, Commerce Labor
& Economic Development,
Capitol Outlay,
Higher Education*

HARDIMAN HERALD AUGUST 2006

SENATOR HARDIMAN MAKES EDUCATION A TOP PRIORITY

One of Senator Hardiman's earliest commitments to the families of the 29th District was to make sure that education remained a top priority in the state budget. Despite tough economic times, Senator Hardiman is pleased to report that he has put a heavy emphasis on quality education at every level. His advocacy will result in a significant increase for our area schools for the 2006-2007 year. The following are highlights of the 2006-2007 School Aid budget:

Increased per-pupil foundation allowance by \$210 per student
Grand Rapids Public Schools received an additional \$4.4 million;
Kentwood Public Schools received an additional \$1.9 million;
Forest Hills Public Schools received an additional \$2.1 million;
Lowell Public Schools received an additional \$822,786.

Increased funds for at-risk students and middle school math and science
Grand Rapids Public Schools received an additional \$814,167;
Kentwood Public Schools received an additional \$102,506;
Forest Hills Public Schools received an additional \$117,659;
Lowell Public Schools received an additional \$90,115.

Set-up equity payments for some school districts to help bridge the gap in funding
Grand Rapids Public Schools received an additional \$482,618;
Lowell Public Schools received an additional \$90,115.

Preserved the Merit Scholarship for students attending Michigan colleges and universities
Since its inception in 2000, the scholarship program has helped more than 345,000 students make their college education more affordable.

Saved the Michigan Tuition Grant Program for students attending private colleges

Increased funds for the state's universities and community colleges by over \$61 million and protected need-based scholarships
Locally, Grand Valley State University received a 6% in funding – the highest of all the universities, receiving \$3.6 million.

The MSU Cooperative Extension and the AG Experiment Station both received a 2% increase in funding, totaling \$1.2 million.

Locally, the 29th District will receive an additional \$15.6 million state funding for education. Our state's future depends on having the best education and well-trained workforce. Senator Hardiman maintains that the 2006-2007 budget ensures that our schools have the necessary resources to educate our kids.

HARDIMAN ADDRESSES NATIONAL GROUP OF STATE LEGISLATORS ON WELFARE SYSTEM CHANGES

During the 2006 National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) held in Nashville, Tennessee, Senator Hardiman addressed the group on the issue of overrepresentation of minority children in Michigan's welfare system. He prepared the presentation along with the director of the Michigan Department of Human Services, Marianne Udow.

According to a report released in March, white children represent 72.1 percent of the total population of minors in Michigan, but only 38.8 percent of those in foster care. Black children represent 17.5 percent of the total population, but 53.2 percent of those in foster care. Native American and African American children historically represent a disproportionate population of welfare recipients across the nation.

Last year, Senator Hardiman requested that DHS look into the issue in greater detail and raise awareness to this increasing trend. Senator Hardiman is chairman of the Michigan Senate DHS budget subcommittee and the Families and Human Services Committee. Senator Hardiman reiterated the importance of examining the causes and the extent of the situation in order to find a solution. This report is the first step in what is going to be an involved process to provide all children and families with equal opportunities.

Senator Hardiman is also chairman of the NCSL Human Services Committee which discussed how some states have made racial equity a public policy priority and identified promising practices to reduce the disproportionate number of minorities and negative outcomes for children of color in child welfare.

SENATOR HARDIMAN MAKES PROCLAMATION URGING CONGRESS TO RENEW RYAN WHITE CARE ACT

Senator Hardiman along with state legislators from five other states joined together to call for immediate Congressional action on the Ryan White CARE Act. The CARE Act, which expired last year, provides access to medical care and treatment for individuals infected with HIV/AIDS.

HIV/AIDS is increasingly affecting minority and rural communities. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) have reported that almost 75% of newly reported HIV cases in the United States are among minorities. Additionally, 62% of the newly reported cases in Michigan are African American.

Hardiman called attention to the fact that too many patients are being penalized for the inaction of Congress. He went on to state that "Congress must act now to reauthorize and modernize the Ryan White Care Act."

Senator Hardiman was joined by fellow legislators from Tennessee, Alabama, Georgia, and Florida. The group of legislators made it clear that it is imperative that federal resources set in the CARE act be sent to where the epidemic is taking place today. Currently, federal funding formulas do not provide equitable funding for women and minorities who are disproportionately being affected by HIV/AIDS.

BACK-TO-SCHOOL 2006

School bus transportation is safe. In fact, buses are safer than cars! Even so, last year, approximately 26 students were killed and another 9,000 were injured in incidents involving school buses. More often than not, these deaths and injuries didn't occur in a crash, but as the pupils were entering and exiting the bus. Remember to share these important safety tips with your children:

Have a safe place to wait for the bus, away from traffic and the street.

Stay away from the bus until it comes to a complete stop and the driver signals you to enter.

When being dropped off, exit the bus and walk ten giant steps away from the bus. Keep a safe distance between you and the bus. Also, remember that the bus driver can see you best when you are back away from the bus. Wait for the driver to signal you to cross the street.

Use the handrail to enter and exit the bus.

Stay away from the bus until the driver gives his/her signal that it's okay to approach.

Be aware of the street traffic around you. Drivers are required to follow certain rules of the road concerning school buses, however, not all do. Protect yourself and watch out!

SENATOR HARDIMAN'S DISTRICT OFFICE HOURS

Senator Hardiman hosts district office hours on the first Monday of every month from 10:00-11:30 AM. On Monday, September 11, 2006, Senator will host office hours at the Garfield Park Neighborhood Association Lodge, 334 Burton SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49507.

Upcoming Office Hours:

Monday, October 2, 2006 at Sandy's Donut House, 2040 Leonard NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Monday, November 13, 2006 at the Cascade Library, 2870 Jacksmith Ave. SE, Grand Rapids, MI 49546

Monday, December 4, 2006 at Mr. Burger, 2101 Lake Michigan Dr. NW, Grand Rapids, MI 49504

Senator Hardiman holds office hours so that the constituents of the 29th District have the opportunity to speak to him about any questions or concerns they may have regarding issues pertaining to state government.

CONTACT INFORMATION

The Hardiman Herald is designed to provide residents and organizations with a timely update of Senator Bill Hardiman's activity in Lansing. If you have any questions, please contact Senator Hardiman's office.

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